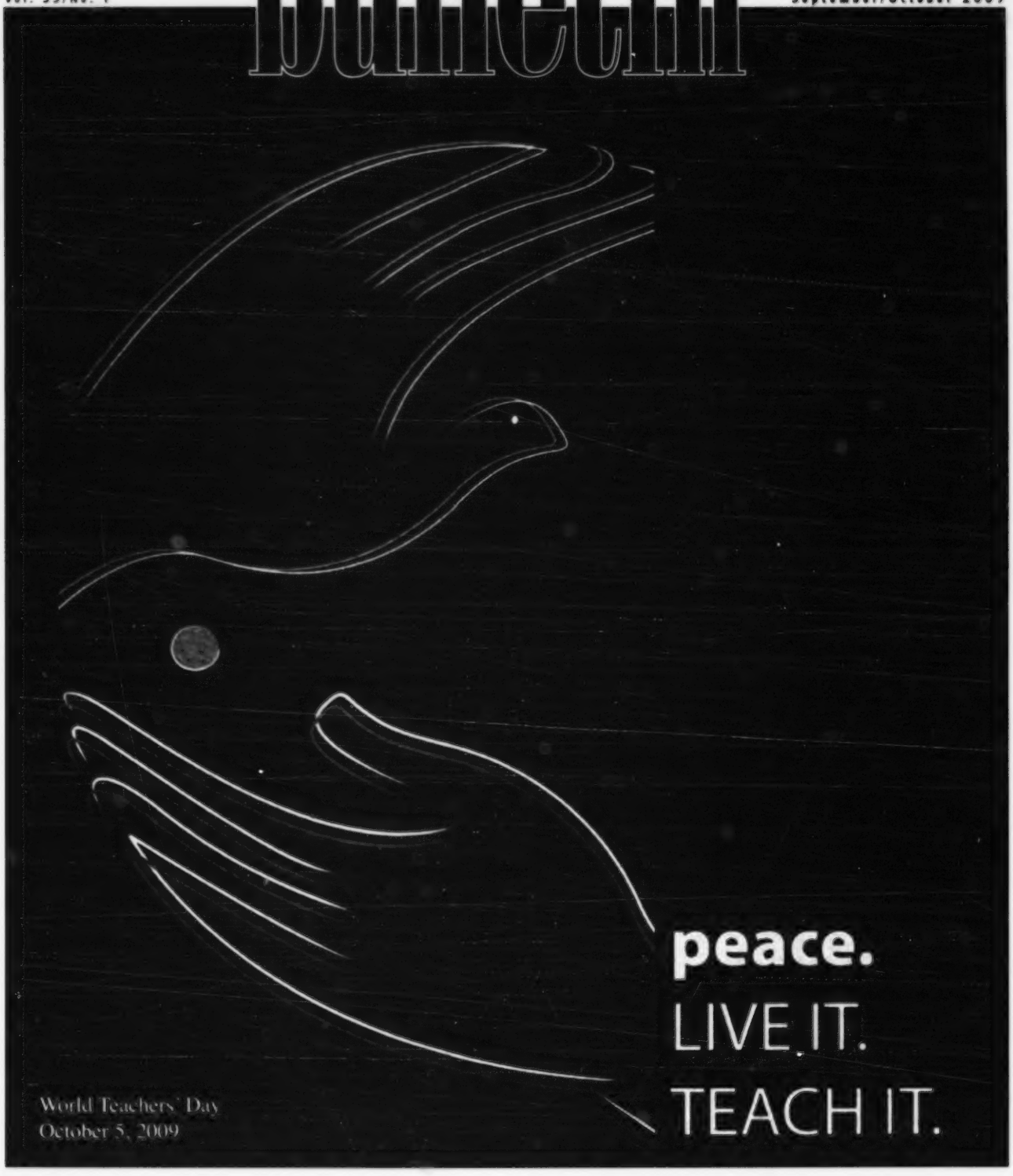
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

Vol. 53/No. 1

September/October 2009



Up Front from the President

As I compose my first *Up Front from the President* I am a myriad of emotions. I am saddened that I am not preparing my classroom for a new group of students, reading ISSPS, preparing to teach, chatting with my fellow colleagues about the adventures or sometimes misadventures of the past summer or relishing in the new children, grandchildren, holidays, weddings, and family events that have broadened their lives. However, I am elated to be representing and working on behalf of the teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador in my capacity as president. I am planning on meeting as many of you as possible over the next two years and representing you at all times to the best of my ability. After completing two rounds of province-wide voting I have been in many schools. This is a vast province geographically and at times the weather can and will play a factor in preventing me from visiting certain areas. I will, however, put in an honest effort to get into as many schools as possible.

September and the start of a new school year is like New Year's Eve without all the hype. As a teacher you get back into a routine with your families, your profession, your school, and make new plans for the next ten months. As you prepare for the next months of your professional life ensure that you take care of yourself. You must remember that your good health, both physically and emotionally, play an important factor in ensuring you are the best teacher you can possibly be. Take time in your planning to plan for you. Take that walk after supper with your family or join an activity that you want to pursue. Take time for you and everyone will benefit in spades – you, your family, and your teaching. If you do not look after you – who will?

The demands on teachers and of the education system can be endless. Education is a field where there will always be something else to complete or refine. Therefore, it is paramount that you establish some parameters around your work life. You need to have your own personal plan ready so you can decide what activities you can realistically participate (volunteer) in your school. At different times in your career you may be able to contribute more to your school in helping develop the school culture but other times you must take into account all the other demands that you encounter outside of your professional life. You must decide on the parameters of what is possible for you to achieve after completing the work day.

Our first requirement in this profession is to teach the students in our care. The teachers of our province do an absolutely fabulous job of providing a top quality education to all the students. We enhance the lives of our students by helping them to grow and succeed and by inspiring a love of learning. The teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador are true professionals. Teachers in this awesome profession go above and beyond on a regular basis to ensure that students are provided with a first rate education. There are numerous stories of teachers providing cakes for student birthdays, stickers, money for students to attend functions, lunches, and even spending money when a student was selected for a sports team and the funds were not readily available for them to participate. The list is endless for the many hours of time given to developing concerts, bands, plays, and leadership skills. There are many more incidents where teachers go above and beyond to ensure that the students of Newfoundland and Labrador have a first rate education in the true sense of the word – not just the delivery of curriculum. Not many of us remember much of the actual curriculum taught to us as students, but we do remember the special connections we developed with our teachers. Those currently teaching will also leave such a legacy with the students they are teaching. The parents of Newfoundland and Labrador send us the very best they have and we as teachers develop those students to the very best of our ability. The evidence of this is shown daily in our schools, community, and province as the fruits of our labour prosper and become the next generation of citizens.

To the Provincial Executive, to the many branch presidents, school representatives, special interest councils and Provincial Executive committee members, thank you for your work on behalf of the teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is through your continued contributions that the NLTA can function effectively.

As you embark on this new school year, whether you are a seasoned teacher, a first year teacher or a teacher with a new position/challenge, I know that the students of this province are extremely fortunate to have such highly qualified, dedicated, compassionate, and enthusiastic teachers to guide their education.

Having been a teacher in Special Services for most of my career I understand the enormous satisfaction and frustrations that teaching brings. I thank all of you for your dedication to this most honourable profession and I am honoured and humbled to be working on your behalf.

Remember that I am only a phone call or e-mail away. All the best for a memorable and rewarding school year!

Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes time. Vision with action can change the world.

– Joel Barker

Lily B.

bulletin

Lesley-Ann Browne
Editor

Michelle Lamarche
Editorial Assistant

Linda Babstock, John Bishop, Elliott Green, Louise King
Design • Printing • Distribution

Linda Farrell
Online Services

The Bulletin is published eight times a year during the school year by the Nfld. and Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1
Tel: 709-726-3223; 1-800-563-3599
Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582
labrowne@nlta.nl.ca
www.nlta.nl.ca

Unless otherwise indicated, materials used in *The Bulletin* may be reproduced or broadcast without permission. Advertisements and/or notices of resources carried in this publication do not imply recommendation by the Association of the service or product.

Advertising inquiries should be directed to:
Michelle Lamarche, Ext. 227
mlamarche@nlta.nl.ca

Subscription Rate: $18 per year.
For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:
November Issue: October 5
December Issue: November 2

ISSN-1189-9662

Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

Features

14 Benefits & Economic Services
H1N1 Influenza Information for Teachers
by Don Ash

16 Living Well
Managing Martha
by Claudette E.S. Coombs

18 Professional Development
Comings and Goings
by Beverley Park

19 *Developing Successful Schools 2009*
by George Tucker

20 *ONSITE 2009*
by George Tucker

21 *Project Overseas 2009*
by Jacinta McGrath

22 Virtual Teacher Centre
Professional Learning
by Jim Murphy

24 Reflections
Another Parable
by Steve Brooks

26 Research
Special Education: It's What We Do!
by Dr. Wayne Nesbit

29 In the Classroom
Careers Coming for Lunch
by Kathleen Hickman

Departments

Up Front from the President 2
On Location News 4
Calendar *back cover*

QSP INC
A TIME INC COMPANY

Magazine Program for Teachers

QSP would like to extend a special offer for you to purchase and renew some of your favourite magazines at special discount prices. They are available to you **online only at www.qsp.ca/faculty.**

Here's how:
1. Go to www.qsp.ca/faculty and enter your ACCESS CODE **"teacher09"**, select **"Shop now"**
2. Enter your **NLTA Group #18188**
3. Shop now and Save Big

Please note that you will **not receive any prizes or rewards from the regular campaign,** and the school does not receive any profit from your discounted orders placed on this website.

You can enter your school in the draw for a Smart Board as seen on the website.

IF YOU ARE ORDERING FOR THE LIBRARY/CLASSROOM, a proper name is required. **DO NOT LIST THE SCHOOL NAME or "LIBRARY" AS THE SUBSCRIBER. Order in the name of the Librarian/Teacher and then just fill in the mailing address of the school/library. Incorrect orders will be rejected by the publishers.**

Thank you in advance for your orders and please enjoy your reading selections. If you have any questions or wish to organize a Fund Raising program for your school or group contact our QSP representative directly:

Sandy McCarty: 1-888-399-8277
sandymccarty@rogers.com

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

GRAND BANK

John Burke High visits the Roaring Twenties

On June 9, John Burke High School, in partnership with the Grand Bank branch of Scotiabank presented its 5th annual cooperative dinner theatre, "SOS Moonlight". Residents of the area were invited aboard the HMS Moonlight for her 1920s maiden voyage across the Atlantic. During the three-course meal, they had the chance to chat with the perky Goodwin sisters, who were covering the story for the gossip column of *The New York Times*. The guests also got a look into the secret lives of the rich and famous passengers, including stylish flappers, rich snobs, a mobster, his moll and two thugs. Other characters included an assortment of personal maids and man servants, the ship's crew and a mysterious stowaway. The audience was also invited to try the Charleston and other dances with some of the passengers. And to make things even more interesting, they witnessed a triple murder and the subsequent investigation. "In all, it was quite an evening for everyone on the *ship*," said Yvonne Powell, a teacher at John Burke High.

This production was a cooperative effort by a number of classes at the school. The Theatre Arts classes were responsible for the script and the acting while the Senior High Music class compiled the music and performed the dances. Design Tech students helped to create the set with Grade 9 Art students providing the backdrop. Students in the Nutrition course planned, prepared and served the delicious three-course dinner. Finally, several Senior High English classes wrote biographies to place on display with photos of each of the performers and the Consumers class designed tickets and publicity posters.

For the first time, Scotiabank joined in partnership with the school by donating an equivalent of the money raised by the school for this fund raising event. John Burke High would like to extend a special thanks to Scotiabank and all those people who came aboard the HMS Moonlight for her eventful maiden crossing.

Cast of "SOS Moonlight".

BAY ROBERTS

Amalgamated Academy breaks bread for women in Afghanistan

As a year-end reflection and commitment to positive change, staff members of Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts met for a pot luck dinner on the evening of June 22 to raise funds and awareness for the women of Afghanistan. The "Breaking Bread for Women" pot luck dinner is an initiative supported by Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, a non-profit organization that provides financial resources for teachers' salaries, training for teachers, and educational resources for Afghan women and girls.

The pot luck dinner was hosted by Amalgamated Academy and involved several invited members of the community, including teachers from surrounding schools and other professional men and women. After enjoying a delicious meal, guests viewed the documentary, *Daughters of Afghanistan*, by Sally Armstrong, which provided awareness of the plight of women in Afghanistan. Since the rise of power of the Taliban in the mid-1990s, Afghan women have been stripped of their civil rights, and illiteracy

among women and girls is extremely high: 85% of women in urban areas are illiterate and 92% of women in rural areas are illiterate. Even in the post-Taliban era, illiteracy remains a major hindrance to the progress and empowerment of women. It is not acceptable for young girls to be taught by male teachers beyond the age of nine. With a shortage of trained female teachers, the majority of these Afghan girls do not advance beyond their primary school education.

Participants in "Breaking Bread for Womjen" from the teaching staff at Amalgamated Academy.

The goal of the pot luck dinner was to raise $750, which pays the salary of a teacher in Afghanistan for a year. Donations for this dinner exceeded this goal, with close to $1200 being raised for the cause. While over one million dollars has been raised through the Breaking Bread for Women initiative in Canada, this was the first such event to be held in Newfoundland. As a designated member of Peaceful Schools International, this event certainly fit well with Amalgamated Academy's Safe and Caring Schools policy which encourages increased awareness of global issues, and an effort to make positive changes in our world.

NLTA Appointment Notice

Deana Hatcher

The Provincial Executive Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is pleased to announce the appointment of Deana Hatcher to the replacement position of Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services, for the period August 1 to December 31, 2009. Deana is replacing Stefanie Tuff who will be on leave during this period.

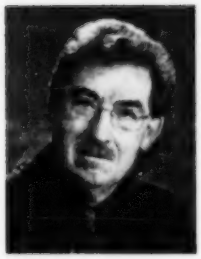
Deana is currently a French Immersion Teacher with the Eastern School District and has provided instruction in intermediate and high school English and French Immersion courses in various disciplines including Science, Social Studies, Career Development, French Language Arts, Religion and Health. She has a Bachelor of Arts (French/Chemistry), Bachelor of Education (Intermediate/Secondary), Master of Business Administration, and she holds a certificate in Financial Planning from the Canadian Institute of Financial Planning.

Deana has completed work in Education Administration, Human Resource Management, Business Law, Economics, Finances and Change Management, Retirement Planning, Income Tax Planning, Strategic Investment Planning, Risk Management, Estate Planning, and Family Law.

Prior to pursuing a career in Education, Deana was Director of Business Development with Capital Management Financial Advisors Inc. where she developed the company's marketing and business plans. She was also responsible for hiring advisors and personnel, and created and developed a training program for new and existing advisors.

Besides teaching at Bishops College in St. John's, Deana was also the NLTA school representative, provided seminars to schools on Overall Financial Well-Being, and professional development sessions on Differentiated Instruction.

NLTA Treasurer recognized for 25 years of service



James Fox

On July 16, 2009, James Fox celebrated 25 years of employment with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

Jim began his employment with the NLTA in 1984 as Treasurer. In his position, Jim is responsible for administration of all funds of the Association. He is consultant to the Association's Finance and Property Committee and is responsible for making arrangements for all seminars, Joint Council meetings, Executive meetings and Conventions of the Association. Jim is also responsible for the preparation of the annual budget and its presentation to BGM.

Our sincere congratulations on 25 years of dedicated and outstanding service.

NLTA EAP Coordinator receives international award

Congratulations to Judy McCann Beranger, EAP Coordinator with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, who was recently presented with the Elder Mediation International Network's Sherren Award for global contributions to the specialty of Elder Mediation. The Ambassador of Canada to Ireland, Mr. Patrick Binns, presented the award to Judy during a reception held at the Canadian Embassy in Dublin at the opening of the World Summit and Symposium for Elder Mediation held in Dublin, Ireland in July.

His Excellency congratulated Judy for her exceptional contributions to the advancement of elder mediation globally. He remarked on her tenacity and inspiring work – both in Canada and abroad. In particular, he commended Judy for her leadership with the International Summit which has brought together some of the greatest minds in the world on elder mediation. The resultant positive impact on families around the world is to her credit.

Judy Beranger accepts her Sherren Award from Mr. Patrick Binns.

Judy is the President of Elder Mediation Canada, and a Past President of Family Mediation Canada, Mediation PEI Inc. and Family Service Canada. Judy promotes and models a person centered philosophy and twice represented Canada on the working team to develop international person centered standards for accreditation for rehabilitation facilities with the Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities. While living in PEI Judy had a very active clinical practice as well as provided mediation services

with families dealing with age related issues from 1991 to 2007 when she moved back to NL. Judy was twice nominated for an honorary doctorate from the University of PEI.

Judy graciously accepted the Award thanking the individuals that nominated her as well as the organizational nomination from Family Mediation Canada.

A "N.E.A.T." Day: Numeracy, Education & Teamwork

On May 29, students from Holy Cross Junior High School in St. John's celebrated Numeracy, Education and Teamwork Day (N.E.A.T). Students from Mr. Shawn Foss's grade 9 mathematics classes worked together to create, organize and instruct fun and cooperative numeracy games for visiting elementary school students. One hundred and twenty students from feeder schools Holy Cross Elementary and Bishop Abraham Elementary visited throughout the day engaging in numeracy games like Capture 5, Prison Break, Set and Let 'er Roll. Prizes were drawn and snacks were served while each student received a certificate of participation. "The goal of N.E.A.T Day was to allow students to enjoy mathematics in a positive, fun and challenging manner while at the same time making connections for teachers and students," said Mr. Foss.

The funding for N.E.A.T was provided in part by a Numeracy Grant given by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for the promotion of Mathematics. Special thanks to Mr. Walter Hammond and all those who aided in the grant proposal and organization of N.E.A.T. Day.

Students take part in a numeracy game during N.E.A.T. Day at Holy Cross Junior High.

WESTERN NEWFOUNDLAND

Active school playgrounds in Western District

New research suggests that play can be very important to a child's academic experience. Regular recess, fitness, or nature time can influence behavior, concentration, and even grades. Children who had more than 15 minutes of recess a day showed better behavior in class than those who had little or none (Barros, *Pediatrics Journal*, 2009). Another recent study of 33 Ontario schools found that physically active kids are in a better condition for learning (Fishburne, *Globe and Mail*, 2007). With this research in mind, in the spring of 2009, Western Health, Labrador-Grenfell Health, and the Western School District partnered to offer a new initiative to K-6 schools, *Active School Playgrounds*. This initiative was designed to help get students more active, especially during recess and lunch. It was thought that an active school playground would help students become physically active every day, return to classes ready to learn, become independent and creative in directing their own play activity, and demonstrate less aggressive behavior on the playground.

Paul Hepditch, physical education teacher at C.C. Loughlin in Corner Brook, helps students with a playground game on the school parking lot.

School principals in the Western School District were invited to send interested individuals to one of four half-day regional training sessions. Forty-eight elementary schools sent representatives, with most schools sending physical education teachers as they would be in an ideal situation to demonstrate various playground games and activities in the physical education class. Each participating school received a playground kit containing resources that could be used to help get students active. In addition, playground stencils were made available to schools to paint school playgrounds to make them more attractive for active play (i.e. hopscotch, four square). T-shirts were also available for schools who wished to highlight their student leaders on the playground.

In a pre-survey of participants, potential obstacles to the establishment of active playgrounds were identified:

- 53% of participants felt there was a lack of playground equipment for children to use.
- 42% felt there was a lack of time and scheduling difficulties. (40% stated that students did not go out at all during recess because of a lack of time at recess.)
- 28% thought there was a lack of play space available for students.
- 19% thought there might be more conflict between students. (Some research shows that there may actually be less conflict with students on active playgrounds than in stuffy classrooms.)

"Schools have been very creative in finding new play areas following the training sessions: town halls, staff parking lots (barricaded off from traffic), abandoned tennis courts, and school walls," said Bill Allan, School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant with the Western School District. " What a wonderful sight to see areas once deserted from active play now filled with students skipping, playing Hopscotch, Four Square, and Kitty in the Corner, and developing their own creative games!"

In the recently released 2009 *Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card*, Dr. Mark Tremblay states that being active feeds the brain, giving active kids an academic advantage over their peers who are sedentary... Active kids perform better in the classroom and get better grades. With only 13% of Canadian kids getting the recommended 90 minutes of physical activity per day, it is hoped that the Active School Playgrounds initiative in the Western School District will help students benefit academically from this increased activity.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

2008 CEC Outstanding Achievement Award Winner

The Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is pleased to announce that the 2008 recipient of the CEC Outstanding Achievement Award is Ann Martin, a life-long contributor to the well-being of exceptional children throughout the Province. The award is presented annually in recognition of outstanding dedication to the field of special education. It acknowledges innovation of teaching strategies, the creation of positive learning environments and an ability to inspire

students and co-workers. During her career, Ann was a highly respected and committed special education teacher and administrator, an educational psychologist and a school board consultant. She influenced the climate of schools where she was a principal in a way that ensured that they were truly "inclusive schools", where all staff recognized their shared responsibility for all children. As a consultant with the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, Student Services Division, Ann had a major impact upon educational practice. Ann Martin has radically changed the lives of children with disabilities and their families. Congratulations!

Pictured (left to right): D. Philpott, CEC; W. Nesbit, CEC; Ann Martin; B. Smith, CEC; G. Sheppard, CEC

CEC Outstanding Achievement Award 2009 call for nominations

The Newfoundland and Labrador Council for Exceptional Children promotes excellence in educational and community services for children with special needs and their families. In keeping with this goal, they are pleased to call for nominations for the annual Outstanding Achievement Award. This award is designed to acknowledge "outstanding contribution to the well-being of exceptional children and youth; innovation of teaching strategies; dedication to the integration of exceptional children; dedication to the creation of positive learning environments; and an ability to inspire students and co-workers". The award is designed to acknowledge the caliber of excellence for which our province is strongly recognized. Nominees must have completed 20 years experience in the field of Special Education.

Individuals who are interested in nominating a local educator/practitioner are asked to contact Dr. David Philpott, CEC Awards Committee Chair (philpott@mun.ca), to obtain details and nomination forms. Nomination must be submitted by December 10, 2009.

Safe and Caring Schools Grant and Award Recipients

The Provincial Advisory Committee for Safe and Caring Schools is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2008-09 Safe and Caring Schools Special Project Fund Grants and Graduating Student Awards. These awards are funded by the Department of Education and were created to recognize, support and encourage district/school and student projects and activities that demonstrate initiative and leadership in promoting Safe and Caring Schools principles and practices.

Thirty schools from across the province received Special Project Fund grants of $500 each and they, along with all applicants, are to be congratulated for their commitment to Safe and Caring Schools principles. The thirty schools are:

Eastern School District: Macpherson Elementary (St. John's); Bishops College (St. John's); St. Kevin's Junior High (Goulds); Gonzaga High School (St. John's); Mary Queen of Peace (St. John's); St. Andrew's Elementary (St. John's); Catalina Elementary (Catalina); Clarenville Primary School (Clarenville); Roncalli High School (Avondale); St. Mark's (King's Cove); Lake Academy (Fortune); St. Joseph's All Grade (Terrenceville).

Nova Central School District: Botwood Memorial Academy (Botwood); Brian Peckford Academy (Triton); Green Bay South Academy (Robert's Arm); Bay d'Espoir Academy (Milltown); Point Leamington Academy (Point Leamington); Valmont Academy (King's Point); William Mercer Academy (Dover).

Western School District: C.C. Loughlin Elementary (Corner Brook); St. Peter's Academy (Benoit's Cove); Our Lady of Labrador (West St. Modeste); Burgeo Academy (Burgeo); Elwood Regional High School (Deer Lake); Stephenville Elementary (Stephenville); St. Lewis Academy (St. Lewis).

Labrador School District: Henry Gordon Academy (Cartwright); Queen of Peace Middle School (Happy Valley-Goose Bay); Mealy Mountain Collegiate (Happy Valley-Goose Bay).

Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial: Ecole des Grands Vents (St. John's).

Eleven Level III students from across the province were selected to receive a Graduating Student Award in the form of a $500 tuition voucher for post-secondary education. As there were a limited number of awards, school districts and Committee members would also like to congratulate the exceptional applicants who were not selected for one of the available awards. The award recipients are:

Eastern School District: Kaitlyn Murphy (Christ the King Academy, Rushoon); Anna Murphy (Bishop's College, St. John's); Crystal Noseworthy (Ascension Collegiate, Bay Roberts); Suyen Oldford (Heritage Collegiate, Lethbridge).

Nova Central School District: Heidi Dixon (Gander Collegiate, Gander); Meghan Ivany (Botwood Collegiate, Botwood).

Western School District: Christy Groves (Mountain Field Academy, Forteau); Myles Harnum (Elwood Regional High School, Deer Lake); Jahyd Chubbs (St. Lewis Academy, St. Lewis).

Labrador School District: Rebecca Harvey (Mealy Mountain Collegiate, Happy Valley-Goose Bay).

Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial: Dillon Jesso (Ecole Sainte-Anne, La Grande Terre).

All grant and award recipients are to be congratulated for their achievements and encouraged to continue in their efforts to create and sustain more safe and caring environments in all their future endeavours.

The Committee resumes its work this school year and looks forward to continuing both the Special Project Fund Grants and the Graduating Student Awards.

Note: Information and application forms for the Special Project Fund grants ($500 per grant), available to support applicable school and/or district-based initiatives, will be sent to schools soon. Please take note of the submission deadline, which will be set for early November 2009.

NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre offers free educational presentations

The NL Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre (NLSACPC) is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to provide non-judgmental support and essential services to anyone impacted by sexual violence. Members work toward the prevention and eradication of sexual violence in all forms through public education and awareness campaigns.

The crisis services of NLSACPC are accessible to all, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, socio-economic status, ability, religious beliefs or geographical location.

NLSACPC offers educational presentations that are designed to raise awareness about sexual violence. Any or all of these presentations can be booked for public events or private groups by contacting their office. Some of the presentations offered include: Body Image and Self Esteem, Healthy and Unhealthy

Relationships, Sexual Harassment, an Overview of Sexual Violence and Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault. All of the services are free of charge, but organizations may be asked to cover or contribute to costs associated with travel.

For further information contact NLSACPC's 24 hour toll-free crisis, information and support line at 1-800-726-2743 (province-wide) or 726-1411 (St. John's region).

Coaker Book Project

The book *To Be My Father's Daughter* by Carmelita McGrath and Sharon Halfyard and its accompanying study guide by Sharon Halfyard and Marion Cheeks have been distributed by the Department of Education as a resource text for Junior and Senior High Schools in the province.

To Be My Father's Daughter was released by the Educational Resource Development Co-operative (ERDC) in May 2008. As well as archival documents, photographs and excerpts from Sir William Ford Coaker's writings, it features an alternative perspective on Coaker through the fictional voice of his daughter, Camilla. While Coaker was front and centre of Newfoundland political life in the early twentieth century, his estranged daughter Camilla or "Cammie" lived on the outskirts of history, chronicling her father's life through detailed scrapbooks. Taking the documents she left as a model, *To Be My Father's Daughter* mirrors the scrapbook format, placing multiple and often contradictory sources side by side to explore the complexity of Coaker and his world.

Oddly enough, the book started out not as a written document, but as a film concept. Filmmaker Sharon Halfyard said, "The original idea was to produce a documentary for television but we had no luck in engaging the interest of a national broadcaster. But by then I'd done so much research, and friends like Marion Cheeks thought the story had potential. I was especially intrigued by Cammie's scrapbooks. I couldn't let the story go."

Writer Carmelita McGrath was also captivated by the scrapbooks. "From the moment I saw them," she said, "I was asking: who was this woman? What was it like to be her? Creating her fictional voice was both a challenge and a journey of discovery."

The book project was a natural fit for the ERDC. "Our mandate is to produce quality, culturally relevant educational material," said Marion Cheeks. "In addition to exploring the life and legacy of Sir William Ford Coaker and the labour movement he created, the ERDC's goal with this project was to

publish a model resource book that learners, as well as the general public, could use to explore and value their own personal and community histories."

Funding for the project was provided by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) under Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The project was also supported by the Sir William Ford Coaker Heritage Foundation, the ERDC and Curzon Village Productions Inc. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education also provided support through its purchase of the text and study guide as a resource for schools.

PlantWatch Newfoundland and Labrador

PlantWatch is part of a national NatureWatch series of volunteer monitoring programs designed to help identify ecological changes such as climate change that may be affecting our environment. Teachers, along with their students, have been participating in the PlantWatch program across Canada for a number of years. The MUN Botanical Garden is delighted to announce a new initiative of PlantWatch Newfoundland and Labrador!

PlantWatch resource kits for teachers and students across the province are currently in the process of being developed. These kits will include information about the PlantWatch NL program, lesson plans and activities to enhance the learning experience, as well as several PlantWatch species to plant and monitor in your schoolyard or learning garden. The first phase of the program is currently underway, and includes a review of relevant science curriculum links and course objectives at various grade levels. While PlantWatch is a science-based program, connections will also be made with social studies, language arts, math, technology, and art learning outcomes. As they begin to develop materials, PlantWatch NL would like to consult with teachers to ensure that these resource kits are meaningful and teacher-friendly. A database of teachers from across the province who are interested in and who would like to participate in the program is currently being created. PlantWatch NL hopes to meet with teachers at various locations throughout the province early in the 2009-10 school year, offering teacher information sessions and hands-on experiences.

If you would like to participate in the program, are interested in training sessions or would like to know more about the program, please contact the Provincial PlantWatch Coordinator, Madonna Bishop at mbishop@mun.ca or Joy Barfoot, Program Developer at jbarfoot@mun.ca.

CANADA

Media Literacy Week 2009

The NLTA has joined the Media Awareness Network (MNet) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) on Canada's fourth annual Media Literacy Week, November 2-6, 2009. The purpose of the week is to raise awareness of the importance of media and digital literacy in the healthy development of Canadian children and youth.

This year's fourth annual week takes place November 2-6, 2009. The theme – *Media Literacy in the Digital Age* – emphasizes the multiple literacy skills needed by today's youth for accessing, evaluating, repurposing, creating and distributing media content.

The week has gained tremendous momentum over the past four years. In 2008, more than 40 collaborators organized activities in celebration of media literacy across the country; everything from small classroom-based projects to large-scale public events. This year, MNet and CTF will again work with education organizations, libraries, and community, parent and youth-based groups to develop and promote a variety of activities leading up to, and during the week.

Media Literacy Week 2009 collaborators include: Association for Media Literacy; Canadian Association for Media; Education Organizations; Canadian Association of Principals; Concerned Children's Advertisers; Ontario Library Association; McGill University, Faculty of Education; National Film Board of Canada; Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada; Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence; REEL CANADA; and YOUCAN.

For more information on the week, visit www.medialiteracyweek.ca.

A&E Canadian Classroom's Essay Contest

Students in grades 5-12 are invited to enter A&E's "Lives That Make a Difference" Essay Contest (formerly the "Biography of the Year Essay Contest") by writing and submitting an original essay in 300 words or less on who they think made the greatest impact on Canadian society in 2009.

Each entry must include the student's name, complete address, postal code, telephone number, age, grade, name of teacher, school, school address, and local cable system (if known).

Send entries to: Lives That Make a Difference Essay Contest, c/o Temple Scott Associates, 250 The

Esplanade, Suite 301, Toronto, Ontario M5A 1J2. Contest ends December 15, 2009. Two winners from each grade level (5th-8th grade and 9th-12th grade) will be selected.

For more information and resources from A&E, please visit www.biography.com/classroom/canadian-classroom.jsp.

Meaning of Home student writing contest

From October 5 to November 13, 2009, students in grades 4, 5 and 6 can enter the third annual Meaning of Home writing contest in support of Habitat for Humanity. Students have the chance to make a difference in their community – the winner will be part of the ultimate gift: A $60,000 contribution towards the building of a Habitat home in or near the winner's community.

Teachers can incorporate the writing contest into their classroom activities and assignments. Here's how the writing contest helps teachers meet some core requirements:

- The writing contest provides students with the opportunity to produce an original piece of work that reflects their capacity for independent critical thought.
- The contest is an activity that students will see as meaningful; one that challenges them to think creatively about a topic that directly impacts their lives – the meaning of home – and will ultimately improve their writing skills.

You can download a complete, ready-to-go Education Module – including a lesson plan, activity ideas, writing tips and a Habitat for Humanity fact sheet – and full contest details at www.meaningofhome.ca (English) or www.sensdunchezsoi.ca (French).

This year's contest has an exciting new element – YOU can decide the winner! Finalists' entries will be displayed on www.meaningofhome.ca and voting will be open to the public. It's a great way to get students excited about participating and let Canada know how involved your school really is! Check out the difference last year's winner made at www.yourhome.ca/homes/article/589712.

H1N1 Influenza Information for Teachers

by DON ASH

The purpose of this information is to update you on efforts being undertaken by the NLTA to deal with issues related to H1N1 influenza. The NLTA is in regular contact with the Department of Education as plans are being developed to help decrease the spread of the virus and address any impacts that the presence of this virus may have on our school system.

Your NLTA Provincial Executive met in late August, discussed the information available from the Departments of Education and Health and Community Services, and School Boards regarding H1N1 plans and initiatives, and developed a number of topics and questions to be discussed with appropriate government and School Board personnel.

Subsequently, NLTA representatives have had meetings with Department of Education and School Board personnel to attempt to have various teacher concerns and questions addressed.

The following is a synopsis of some of the topics discussed. The NLTA will continue to monitor and influence the impact of measures being taken on the school system to address H1N1 issues.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

1. Clean, Cover and Contain Campaign

• The Department of Education and School Boards are investing significant effort and resources to aid in communication of information regarding H1N1 influenza and good hygiene practices. These include a list of FAQs, information brochures for parents, health information posters for schools, web based resources and links to resources at www.gov.nl.ca/edu. Links are also available on www.nlta.nl.ca.

2. "Clean" Efforts

• Hand sanitizer equipment and solution has been provided to all school districts for installation in schools.

• A maintenance checklist has been developed requiring custodial staff to check washrooms for adequate supplies and cleanliness regularly throughout the day.

• Custodial staff have been asked to re-prioritize tasks to focus on cleaning items frequently touched by students – door knobs, desktops, handrails, etc.

3. Monitoring and Reacting

• A Provincial School Health Action Committee (PSHAC) with representatives from school districts, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Community Services has been established for monitoring and planning purposes.

• Each district has established a committee to monitor, evaluate, and deal with issues related to H1N1 influenza which arise in schools.

A number of questions and concerns have been raised by teachers which are specific to teachers. This information has been posted on the Members Only Section of the NLTA website. Teachers were provided with a user name and password last school year for access to the Members Only Section. Your user name is usually your email address and if you have forgotten your password you can request a change on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). Click "Member Login" and "Forgot Password?".

Many of the answers to questions and actions required to address concerns will depend on the extent of an H1N1 influenza outbreak. The topics and questions discussed with the Department of Education include: vaccinations; school disruptions; teacher absence; family leave; responsibility for teachers to provide make up work to students; classroom accommodations to allow hand cleaning; NLTA input to Provincial and District Committees.

The NLTA will update the progress of discussions or initiatives on the Members Only Section of the NLTA website.

With the potential for a significant outbreak of H1N1 influenza, 2009-10 is shaping up to be an unusual school year. Of paramount importance will be efforts to maintain the health of students and staff as much as is possible. The education system, and teachers at the heart of the system will, depending on the seriousness of any flu outbreak, have to be flexible. While instruction and learning are the reason for a school's existence, 'time on task' may be impacted as measures are taken to focus on maintaining the health of students. The NLTA will monitor, and advocate, on behalf of teachers and our students as the situation unfolds.

If teachers have any questions or concerns please contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division at the NLTA, 1-800-563-3599, 726-3223, mail@nlta.nl.ca.

Don Ash is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA.

2009 Pre-Retirement Seminar

REGISTRATION FORM

Name

Home Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Social Insurance Number

School Name

School Telephone

Email

Please check which session you will be attending:

- ☐ **Oct. 15-16** – Hotel Gander, Gander
- ☐ **Oct. 22-23** – ~~Holiday Inn, Stephenville~~ CANCELLED
- ☐ **Oct. 29-30** – Mt. Peyton, Grand Falls-Windsor
- ☐ **Nov. 5-6** – Greenwood Inn & Suites, Corner Brook
- ☐ **Nov. 12-13** – Holiday Inn, St. John's
- ☐ **Dec. 3-4** – Capital Hotel, St. John's
- ☐ **Dec. 10-11** – Holiday Inn, St. John's

Will your spouse be attending? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of spouse (if attending)

Earliest eligibility date for pension

Have you attended a previous pre-retirement seminar?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Note:

- Teachers within two years of retirement (on or before June 2012) are eligible to attend.
- All participants must pre-register.
- You will receive confirmation prior to seminar.
- Travel costs will be paid according to policy and only to the nearest seminar.
- Teachers are advised to bring a calculator.

Please submit registration form to:

Melanie Jaster
Benefits and Economic Services Division
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 *(toll free)*

NOTE: As space is limited, registrations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

FOR NLTA OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Received	Confirmation Sent	Information Package Sent

Managing Martha

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

Most of us are familiar with the story of how Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, enthralled with His stories while her sister Martha was busy preparing meals, cleaning up and probably changing the beds! Each did what she felt needed to be done; Mary, happily seizing the moment and Martha, dutifully meeting the practical needs of her guests. Have you ever felt that you somehow found your way into Martha's shoes? Have you resented the fact that some people never do 'their share of the work' or seem to 'get away with' all sorts of things that you wouldn't even consider doing or neglecting? Does it upset you that life is unfair? Do you sometimes think that you would like to 'just sail through life', like some people you know, without feeling guilty or responsible for others?

Well, in case you haven't yet accepted it, here's a reminder: the only part of the previous scenarios that you can actually do anything about, are the *resentment*, *upset* and *guilt* parts! We can't control what other people do or think or feel and we certainly can't control when the rain falls. Although we have little control over others or parts of our environment that impact our emotional well-being, we must consciously and deliberately choose how we respond to those people and conditions. If we can start this transformation by rearranging our thoughts, beliefs and attitudes, then our actions soon follow.

Are you off Balance?

In chronically unsatisfactory situations, we tend to establish a Comfort Zone or mental state where we accept our lives as either 'doing what is needed' or reaching the best that can be achieved. We get stuck there because of the 'no guarantee' risk and the excessive mental energy required to move forward. We loose momentum to pursue a personal vision or goal and find it easier to experience and express regret and resentment. When we start to blame other people or conditions for our plight, we relinquish personal responsibility for, and *control over*, our lives.

Yes, we live in a flawed world and also work in a flawed system. Some aspects of our work culture encourage us to become out of balance with our needs. Exposure to an environment of multi-directional demands, decreased respect, 24-hour access and limited involvement in decision making can each interfere with our mental and physical ability to care for ourselves. When our job interview moves to the extra-curricular topic of how much we are willing to give, we know the "right" answers. We make choices that may temporarily help the system but can be detrimental to our life balance. Eventually, we pay the personal cost in health, relationships and career.

Why Do We Accept Imbalance?

Most of us already acknowledge that we function in a less than healthy lifestyle pattern and environment, and we know that the choice to remain there is costing us.

To create change, it helps if we first understand *why* we choose to continue our unhealthy ways. If we explore our personal value system and standards we gain insight into the reasons for our choices. Here are a few examples: If we value work and high standards and for some tasks, have more confidence in our own competence than in that of others, then we are likely to take on more than we reasonably should. That feeling and subsequent behaviour isn't restricted to lesson plans and committee membership but spills over to folding towels and mowing the lawn!

If we feel rejected or undervalued, then we may accept, or even seek, extra work to satisfy our need to belong and be recognized.

If we see an injustice that is being ignored or neglected by others, our desire to "do the right thing" may lead us to yet another task. We prize our reputation of standing up to wrong or paying attention to details so, of course, we act!

One danger in the previous examples stems from our motivation and expectations. If we do the extra work but still aren't appreciated, accepted or rewarded and the injustice isn't corrected, we experience several emotional and physical consequences. Fatigue, exhaustion and illness are common physical reactions while anger, resentment, blame, disillusionment and resignation lead the way emotionally. We may have believed that if we initiated action, others would follow but when that didn't happen we had to make the choice to continue, or stop, doing all the extras.

Overcome Martha's Obsessions

Okay, now we know that picking up the slack for others can become our role in life, if we allow it. If that

isn't where we want to spend our time and energy, we need to take different action to get what we need and want for ourselves.

A first step is to *choose the right goals*. If we are to put our time, energy and any other resources into creating change, rather than doing all of those other meaningful 'make work' projects, our new goals should be worth the switch in focus and should be related to our priorities. To determine our top priorities, we can answer a few basic questions about our lives. What are the most important things in my life? What makes me feel happy? When do I feel most energized? What will be important five or ten years from now? What pleases me about my life and what would cause regrets?

Considering those questions will help us to fine tune the things that really matter to us. The next part of analyzing our focus is to calculate the time and energy that we spend on our priorities. We may be surprised at the proportion of our mental and physical resources that we actually waste on things which we claim to be unimportant to us. That's definitely an indicator that it is time to re-evaluate. When our stated priorities and our expenditure of resources are not aligned, we can be sure that we are dissatisfied with our lives!

Creating a satisfying life isn't as simple as following a few tips, nor is creating personal change a simple accomplishment. The process is complex, hard work and requires constant vigilance. Desired results can only be achieved if we seriously commit to the effort.

The next step is to *mentally rearrange our thoughts*. We need to reinterpret situations by clarifying our expectations and those of others, and by monitoring and revising our reactions. Like Martha, we may spend our time looking after details then complaining, while, like Mary, others enjoy the moment and avail of the fruits of our work without noticing our expense. Although we might object to it, that is nobody's issue but our own!

Why do we do that? Is it because: we like the extra work; we want to 'do the right thing'; things won't get done if we don't do them? We need to understand what drives us and, at some point in our lives, we need to determine whether or not we can afford to be Martha.

Who are the people who notice or benefit from our detailed input? What impact would it have if we sat and absorbed the ambience rather than tried to create a perfect setting? Those who notice, enjoy not having to do the work, but also know it is unfair to always expect that contribution from someone else. We can be respectful of others, show courtesy and provide support while still taking care of our own needs and protecting the pathway to achieving our goals. It is a matter of balance. This cognitive restructuring allows us to reinterpret motives and actions and redirect energy to facilitate healthier decision-making.

To make things happen, our next step is to *verbalize our feelings and needs in the situation*. This gives us the opportunity to clarify our personal direction and let others know what we are willing to give, as well as, what we expect from them. Now, we can't plan on others doing what we expect, especially when it is contrary to what they have habitually done! However, by verbalizing our view, we can make informed decisions about how we proceed. If others state that they are unwilling to contribute as we wish, then we can legitimately re-evaluate our contribution. If others suddenly recognize the cost we have been paying and therefore want to adjust their expectations and the workload fairly, then our need to do the extra work is either eliminated or diminished.

Finally we *choose to act* on what we believe is our most reasonable and acceptable option. By making this choice, we decrease our resentment and increase personal pleasure or satisfaction because we have taken control. From this point forward any stress we experience comes from our own irrational choice to continue doing what isn't healthy for us. We are now acting in a way that we consciously choose, rather than a way that resulted from feeling pressured by external factors or historical influences. By overcoming the habits developed through past experiences and memories, we are given the opportunity to eliminate negative, limiting beliefs and actions. Rather than drain our present energy, we are now in a position to seek, attract, recognize and then avail of new opportunities to redirect our mental and physical energy.

Unpleasant things happen in our lives and we often find ourselves in challenging situations but we can still choose and plan how to react. Consider this example and create a mental image that can serve as a daily reminder of our ability to redirect our environment: if we use eaves trough and a rain barrel, we can control some part of where the rain falls and if we use the collected water, the result can be beneficial.

Can you afford to continue as you are?

At this start of a new school year, when you open new books, start new files and write your first lesson plans, use those things as reminders to also set new goals to support your personal well-being. Reflect on the impact of your choices on your health, energy, satisfaction and relationships. Your Quality of Life is certainly as important as your Quality of Teaching!

Claudette Coombs is a coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Judy Beranger (ext. 265).

Comings and Goings

by BEVERLEY PARK

People are constantly on the move it seems … always coming and going, especially in the summer. In the beginning, families pack up the tents and trailers and RVs and head off to cabins and cottages and grandmas' houses. The ritual repeats itself in reverse as summer comes to an end. There is also another kind of seasonal coming and going – the departures and arrivals at the end and beginning of the school year.

Retirements and other transitional moves see some moving out in June to be replaced by others moving in in September. From the perspective of the people involved, in most instances, both the departures and the arrivals are positive. Retirements are the culminating point of a long career, a deserved reward for years of service and accompanied by a sense of satisfaction and achievement. For those coming in, new schools represent new beginnings, fresh starts, new challenges and opportunities.

But what about those of us who host the retirement parties, who are neither coming nor going? How do we feel after the bad jokes have all been told and the glasses of cheap wine have been raised one final time to toast a colleague? I have been told that there is often a sense of loss, of regret, even abandonment. While we all know that no one is irreplaceable, we also know that each individual brings something truly unique to his or her place of work. The conversations would not be the same without their voice, and even if they were not our best friends on staff, we miss them.

Then, a mere eight weeks or so later we are the ones who must welcome the new arrivals. How do we feel then? Go on, admit it … don't you feel just a tinge of envy for their freshness, their clean cubicle, their new pens and the mug that has yet to be stained and corroded with coffee they haven't had time to drink? We watch with mild amusement as they navigate their way around the minefield of staffroom culture.

At the NLTA we have had our fair share of comings and goings over the past few years. I still miss Alex Hickey's quiet wisdom, but Jim Murphy's laughter is now familiar. When Lloyd Hobbs left, we knew his witty retorts (and from a Minister's son, too!) would not be equaled; yet, we've nearly bust a gut in appreciation of Steve Brooks' stories.

One of the things we must remember is that the people coming in are not replacing the people who are leaving – they are simply filling the position that was vacated. No one can truly take the place of another because we all have our gifts (and our foibles) which make us and the way we do our work truly one of a kind.

As you read this, look around your staff room. Who is not there now who was there last year? How do you honour the contribution that they made to the school, to their students and to you, as a colleague? Who is there that was not there last year? How do you welcome them? How do you help and advise them while at the same time giving them the space to find their own way? And if you've done nothing particular in either case, perhaps you ought to.

During the span of my career thus far, I have had the thrill (and the anxiety) of walking into a new work environment a few times. I have always appreciated those who took the time to visit my classroom or my office to see if I needed anything, if I was settling in. No big deal, you say. Very big deal, I say! And one day, I hope, though not anytime soon, I shall have the thrill and the anxiety of retirement. I hope that when I do, the good wishes are genuine and heartfelt; a fare thee well rather than an inhaled "It's about time!"

Given the demographics of our teaching force, and one clause in our collective agreement which is the envy of our colleagues across the country, there will continue to be many departures and arrivals in our staffrooms. If, for the time being, you are going nowhere, it is important to move quickly beyond any feelings of envy to recognize that someone has to be there to wave goodbye and to say welcome and, guess what? It's YOU! Even if it's a day that you're so busy that, to use a good Newfoundland expression "you don't know whether you're coming or going," take a moment to say a proper goodbye or a sincere welcome.

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Developing Successful Schools 2009

Learning Focused Conversation: Practical Strategies for Collaborative Inquiry

by GEORGE TUCKER

From July 20-23, Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, hosted the annual Developing Successful Schools (DSS) Institute. Approximately 60 school administrators and teachers from the four Atlantic Provinces, including a delegation of 14 representing the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, participated in a wonderful learning experience with internationally-renown presenter, Bruce Wellman.

It is understood that educational leaders wear many hats at once as they bring positional responsibility, technical knowledge and information to meetings and work sessions. Therefore, knowing when and how to assert oneself with the group and when and how to integrate oneself with the group is often a delicate balancing act for mindful leaders. Skillful leaders are able to manage three simultaneous agendas with and for their groups: task focus; process skill development; and relational development.

Mr. Wellman's expertly facilitated interactive sessions helped the DSS 2009 participants explore and apply a leadership repertoire that will allow them to flex between the stances of presenting, collaborating and facilitating when communicating important information and to support groups in generating and processing information. Knowing when and how to flex between these stances will allow skilled leaders to productively and confidently influence positive outcomes for groups and manage difficult topics and conversations. Hopefully as the DSS 2009 delegates hone their skills in helping to facilitate "learning focused conversations" the strategies learned and practiced under Mr. Wellman's guidance will help them to preserve a place at the table while helping to ensure that the work of the whole group is effectively, efficiently and meaningfully accomplished.

The DSS 2009 session included the following components:

- principles and formats for designing effective group work;
- strategies for developing flexibility with three leadership stances: presenting, collaborating, and facilitating;
- concepts and skills for framing group purposes, tasks and processes;
- a repertoire of strategies for energizing groups and supporting information processing;
- a toolkit of verbal and nonverbal skills and moves;
- ways to increase confidence when dealing with difficult topics and difficult groups.

DSS 2009 was a successful initiative in all areas as the following quotes from the event evaluation forms attest. These representative quotes should be all the proof you need to mark your calendar for DSS 2010.

- *This is a wonderful opportunity for educators to come together to both learn and network with and from others.*
- *My first time at DSS. This has been a marvellous session. Very informative and applicable. I am already planning how to use this information in the fall. Well-organized!! Well Done!! Thank you.*
- *The opportunity to meet and learn from educators from within and beyond our province has been great. Those conversations are invaluable to reflecting on the, what, why, and how of what we are doing as a system. Bruce has both the style and substance to make this investment of time worthwhile for participants. He is a strong coach and model.*

(continued on page 20)

DSS 2009 delegates on the steps of Hesler Hall, Mount Allison University.

• *This was an amazing institute!! Bruce embeds the content in his presentation so you have a model to follow. His manner is engaging and approachable; I found it easy to be in a learning situation all day with him. Beautiful campus and great facilities – good accommodations – wonderful food – and very well organized. Thank you for this opportunity!! I'm excited to be able to put this to work!*

DSS is an annual event made possible through a partnership between the four Atlantic Teacher Associations (NLTA, NBTA, PEITU and NSTU) and the New Brunswick Department of Education.

Information on DSS 2010 will be available in early 2010. Contact George Tucker, Administrative Officer in the PD Division of the NLTA, at gtucker@nlta.nl.ca if you are interested in being a participant.

ONSITE 2009

In mid August 2009 thirteen adventurous environmental science teachers from Newfoundland and Labrador met in scenic Gros Morne National Park for a week of practical, hands-on professional development. Participants stayed at the Gros Morne Cabins in Rocky Harbour and took day excursions to sites that were specifically selected by Parks Canada staff who offered their expertise on a variety of topics. Four main themes were studied: Ecological Monitoring, the Marine Environment, Stream Monitoring and the Forest Environment. The high school environment teachers participated in a number of field trips which provided them with an opportunity to experience, first hand, scientific procedures as well as in-depth environmental science content that they will bring back and utilize with their own students.

Participants at ONSITE 2009.

For the third consecutive year, a Social Studies Institute ran concurrently with the Environmental Science Institute. The dozen Social Studies teachers traveled to Gros Morne with their science colleagues but departed by coach bus on day two for a five-day excursion to Port au Choix, L'Anse aux Meadows and Red Bay. At these Parks Canada historic sites, the participants experienced firsthand all that the historically significant locations and its passionate Parks Canada staff could offer.

Social Studies teacher participants at ONSITE 2009

The ONSITE Institute is sponsored by the Department of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and Parks Canada. The Department covers all expenses incurred by the participants including transportation, meals and lodging.

Information re ONSITE 2010 will be available after Easter 2010. If you are interested in attending, contact George Tucker, Administrator Officer, PD Division, NLTA.

Project Overseas 2009

by JACINTA MCGRATH

When I first learned of Project Overseas I was travelling in Africa and happened to meet a fellow Canadian who was just finishing up 'Project Uganda'. When I learned that this experience offered Canadian teachers the opportunity to travel abroad and share in educational learning strategies, I knew immediately that this was for me. I was thrilled when I got the call back in January from the NLTA (who, along with the Canadian Teachers' Association, sponsors this venture) informing me that I was the successful applicant from Newfoundland. Six months later I was on a plane with four other educators from across Canada and heading for Guyana.

Upon arrival to this foreign land we were welcomed with open arms by the members of the Guyana Teachers Association and the Guyanese community in general. The inept value placed on education in this country was immediately felt as 'the Canadians here to help our country' were met with smiles, interviewed by national news broadcasters and local papers alike.

My placement was in a mining village called Bartica. Working conditions at Bartica Secondary School were certainly different than what I was accustomed to – there was no glass in the windows, no Smartboards, one board eraser for the entire school and temperatures were often above 40 degrees Celsius. Donkeys, dogs, goats and cows were regular visitors to our schoolyard. There was no gymnasium, no music room and some classes housed up to 45 students in one room. There were times when we had no electricity and days when we did not have running water. There was no photocopier and no fax machine. Teachers' ages ranged from 17 to 66 – many with no formal education.

Despite the differences that we shared in terms of resources, or lack thereof, it is not these images that will remain with me along my educational journey. I will, however, remember Teacher Sylvester who travelled five hours by river boat and crossed three water falls just to attend our sessions. I will remember Teacher Diane who attended my classes each day with all of her three children in tow – each all eager to learn in their own way. I will remember five-year-old Leon whose eyes lit up when I demonstrated chemical combustion using regular household items. I will hold dear memories of Teacher Sylvia who at 67 years of age and 38 years of teaching experience would only call me Miss McGrath and refused to call me by my first name. Seeing the happy faces of the children who came to school each day with nothing on their feet and yet so eager to learn, somehow made you forget about the 40 degree temperatures outside.

Canada night with students from Bartica Secondary School.

The Project Evaluation form from Collette, one of the participants, sums up the overall thoughts and impressions of the Canadian teachers. She states: "It should be mandatory for all people in our village to attend these sessions. Each hour with the Canadians is breathtaking. For the first time in a long time I am excited to get up each morning and attend school – we them, we never know what is going to come next". Sitting in on a Union meeting where one of the prevalent issues was fighting for toilets in every school as opposed to latrines certainly put into perspective our differences in issues.

The sign that hangs over the Guyana Teachers Union building reads *We Mold a Nation*. I am so fortunate to have been a small part of that. I left Newfoundland in early July thinking I was going to bring so much to this country, but what I have found is that I am leaving with much more instead.

Jacinta McGrath is currently on leave from her position as Assistant Principal of Stella Maris Academy in Trepassey.

Professional Learning

by JIM MURPHY

A speaker I recently had the honour of hearing used the expression "If you don't know where you are going, then any road will get you there." The complete text in its original context follows:

'Cheshire Puss,' she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider. 'Come, it's pleased so far,' thought Alice, and she went on. 'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where—' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

'—so long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

(Excerpt from Lewis Caroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865)

Of course, this literary reference can be applied as much to our personal lives as our professional lives. Planning is important. Planning is what helps us achieve personal and professional goals. As educators, it is critical to plan professional learning opportunities and to set goals that can be achieved. It is also critical to take advantage of available technologies to enhance the opportunities.

Why Professional Learning?

Why is professional learning important? The analogies that come to mind are usually "I would not take my Porsche (insert sigh here) to my backyard mechanic friend, nor would I take as gospel the advice of a medical practitioner who graduated many years ago and has done very little to stay current in the profession." So, as educators, it is important to remain current, to be aware of emerging strategies and tools that engage our learners and to ensure that they experience the best possible success. So, what then is the ultimate goal of all professional learning? That the teacher be better able to teach, or that the learner be better able to learn? It is an interesting chicken/egg relationship, but it certainly points to the correlation that exists between student learning and professional learning. Keeping this connection in mind, how we plan and implement our professional learning goals is critical to the success of our students.

So, what kinds of professional learning opportunities should I be accessing?

In the past, most of what was recognized as "professional development" usually came through a district office, Department of Education or perhaps the Association. It was typically a "workshop" that lasted a day or two. Educators gathered at the well, drank of the knowledge, and left, in many instances, only somewhat satiated. Naturally, the unintended outcome, the opportunity to meet and network professionally, encouraged a collegiality that continued well after three-thirty on day two. So, although singular in purpose, the face-to-face session at the very least initiated a desire to share ideas and issues.

But it is certainly well now established that PD as we know it needs to take on many dimensions, and access to technologies offers an astounding array of opportunities that can be offered in a "just enough/just in time" format. There is no one panacea. Therefore, choosing a singular approach to professional learning is rarely, if at all, a sound approach. It is also important to look inwardly at the organization for the expertise we seek as much as outwardly when the knowledge we desire is beyond the scope of the organization. On the other hand, the knowledge and expertise that we are seeking can sometimes be sought in the classroom of the teacher in the adjoining room.

Here are a few samples of internal approaches to professional learning that, according to research, have the greatest impact on student learning:

- teacher learning teams/professional learning teams (PLCs);
- creation and aggregation of professional learning resources and exemplars of work;
- a school-based collaborative teacher that meets teacher needs and provides just in time skills and knowledge;
- teacher mentoring programs/peer observations of practice;

- grade level/subject-based teams;
- opportunities for both formal and informal in-service involvement;
- time for professional learning and collaboration built into teachers' work day;
- professional learning activities that are embedded in teachers' contexts and that are ongoing over a period of time;
- high intensity job-embedded collaborative learning is very effective;
- an environment that supports the involvement of teachers in decision making and problem solving;
- teacher induction program for new teachers with release time for new teachers and mentor teachers, and formal training for mentors.

Of course, these practices need to be supported by external exposure to other forms of professional learning such as online communities, workshops and experts through external seminars and conferences.

What kinds of PL activities can I access?

You can address professional learning needs through a variety of approaches in face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous environments. In no particular order, peer mentoring /collaboration, subject-area collaboration, online conferences, webinars, professional reading/journals, online community participation, podcasts, attending a conference, lead teacher skill building sessions, team planning and teaching, participation in NLTA special interest councils, provincial/national membership to educational organization, presenting at a conference and video conferencing are but a few of the myriad of traditional and technological approaches to professional learning that are available. Of course, continued post-secondary not only tops up your salary if you are not already at the top of the scale, it also tops up your knowledge and skills!

What about professional learning and ICT skills? (Information and Communications Technology)

"Professional learning restricted to a few days a year does not offer adequate opportunities to master new tools for teaching and learning. Workshops, often external to the school because of the need to access reliable and appropriate equipment, are frequently delivered by IT experts who have a good understanding of how to use the software and/or hardware in question, but who may have less knowledge of the curriculum application of these tools. Despite their frequent use, there is widespread recognition that one-off workshops and similar activities have limited impact. An extensive study of literature conducted for the New Zealand Department of Education found that '... it is generally accepted that listening to inspiring speakers or attending one-off workshops rarely changes teacher practice sufficiently to impact on student outcomes. One approach to address this is to implement mechanisms at the school level to reinforce learning that takes place at one-off-workshops. This is particularly exemplified by the case studies, where school based teams along with IT support are in place to reinforce the external learning." (http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/SICTAS/SICTAS_pl.pdf)

As you develop your learning goals for the year, take stock of all the available resources you have at your disposition and move forward with your plan. Take advantage of the opportunities with which you are presented and be master of your own professional learning. Have a safe and enjoyable school year, and don't forget to get involved with connecting with your peers, sharing your ideas for impacting student learning on MyVTC.ca as we continue to evolve.

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.

Another Parable

by STEVE BROOKS

If you have ever bought someone else's house you will know that no matter how carefully you inspect the property there is always going to be a surprise or two in store for you once you move in. This little story is about one of those discoveries and how I reacted to the situation.

A few years back I took a new position with the school board. As a result, I had to relocate from a small rural community on the Bonavista Peninsula so that I could assume my duties in St. John's. I was required to take up my new position early in August which created some issues for my wife and our five children. Janice could not secure leave from her position until the end of September and the children were not interested in moving until they absolutely had to. For the record, we believed the dog wanted to remain with the kids. As a result, I ended up moving into our new, previously owned, home by myself.

Knowing that she would be remaining in our old home with the children and the dog, Janice had to decide what pieces of furniture and appliances she could do without, so that they could be transported in with me. After careful consideration she decided that there was nothing she could do without and chose to keep everything. As a result, I was sent into a strange neighborhood with only an army cot and hotplate. Technically I moved into our new home the first week of August; in reality, I was really only camping out. Each day I would go to the office, work late and each evening return home to my cot, my hotplate and a can of Puritan Irish Stew. Some evenings I would splurge and bring home a can of Campbell's Chunky. It was important for me to economize because I was purchasing fresh underwear and socks on a daily basis. To anyone taking notice, the house would have appeared vacant. I could only imagine the pleasures my wife was experiencing having access to a washer, dryer and stove, along with five helpful children and a dog.

One day the routine got unbearable and I resolved to go home early and take a long walk to acquaint myself with my new neighborhood. Our new house had three doors – a back door, a side door and a front door. Since the front door was the quickest route to my camp, the back and side doors had never been unlocked under my watch. As soon as I had finished my Campbell's Chunky (I had been in a generous mood), I strolled out the front door. I checked the door and decided that there would be no need to lock it. I was not planning to be gone long and I doubted thieves would be very interested in my old cot and hotplate. Firmly closing the heavy old-fashioned screen door, I set out on my local reconnaissance of the area.

As it turned out, the walk was long and enjoyable. In fact, the sun had set by the time I returned home. As I walked up the dark driveway it occurred to me just how empty the house looked, especially since I had failed to leave a single light on before leaving. As I reached for the front screen door I was surprised that it did not open easily. In fact it did not open at all. I pulled harder. No luck. It would seem that one of the few surprises I was to discover about my new home was that the old-fashioned screen door automatically locked when closed. I instinctively checked my pockets for keys; I had none. I was locked out. To confirm this, I checked each of the other doors, returned and checked the front door and for safe measure checked all the doors and my pockets a second time.

My wife has always called me the analytical type. I assume this is a compliment. So I took a moment to take stock of my situation. I was locked out of a dark empty house that the people in the neighborhood would rightly assume was unoccupied. I marched around the house inspecting all the windows and rechecking all the doors just to be sure. As luck would have it, I had left the window to the back room in which I had been camping open three or four inches. This was the good news. The bad news was that the room was on the second floor. After making a futile, and embarrassing, attempt to jump and grasp the windowsill, I immediately began investigating ways to climb to the window.

After careful consideration I ruled out trying to get my old van into the backyard to use as a scaffold. I first dragged an old picnic table over to the house and tried every possible angle only to learn how awkward picnic tables are to move by yourself. In the back of our new property was an old shed. During

the initial inspection and purchase of the property I had given this shed the most cursory of attention. I now took new interest and investigated. It was my luck that the night sky was bright and along with the lights from the side street, I was able to make out images in the dark building. In one corner was a stack of old tires and on the wall was an ancient ladder. I considered the ladder. It was one of those ladders you used to find in your grandparent's barn. Two long misshaped poles with old fence pickets nailed across for footholds. I decided to try the tires. I rolled the four tires down to the house and stacked them as high as possible. The only time I managed to get on top of the unstable structure, I lost one leg down the hollow centre of the pile and sent myself sprawling across the lawn. I decided to try the ladder.

I must tell you, the state of the ladder did nothing to encourage confidence. I leaned it as close to parallel with the side of the house as I possibly could. Hoping, without the insight of an engineer, that this would add strength to the frail apparatus. I carefully climbed to a position in which I could slide the window open far enough to allow entry. As I was doing this, the thought struck me – what does this look like? Here I was stealing into a dark house by way of ladder to a second floor window in back of a house. I would not have been surprised if the police had shown up. To make matters worse, I realized that I had no proof that this was actually my house. Distracted by this thought as I was attempting to reach in the window, my foot became stuck in the oddly made ladder. My forward momentum caused me to fall forward and to spin ninja style into my bedroom.

By this time I was totally exhausted and out of breath. I had only one thing on my mind. I ran downstairs to the front door. I had to figure out what was wrong with the screen door. I opened it and closed it several times to confirm that it locked each time. I fiddled with the lock and tried again. It still locked. Totally engaged in this process of examination I stepped out onto the front step so that I could get a better grip on the handle as I pushed in and out on the latch. "This is the strangest thing," I said aloud as I closed the door to check it again. I had forgotten that I had stepped outside. As I looked, from the outside, at my locked door I could not help but think, "Steve, you just locked yourself out of your home twice in less than one hour."

I had become so engaged in the immediate situation of the locked door that I had totally forgotten the big picture. My goal had been to get back into my home, not to lock myself out again. As I reflect on this little misadventure, I can not help but to think of how it can be a lesson for all of us in both our personal and professional lives. We all face distractions at home and at work that appear urgent and important. We have to guard against becoming so fixated on these distractions and setbacks that we lose focus on those things that really matter. In the moment, the big thing for me was getting back into my home. In life, the big things are our health and fitness, the health and well being of our families, and our professional and personal happiness. We have to avoid, as Stephen Covey warns, of becoming "caught in the thick of thin things." If we can manage to do that we will find that rather than closing doors, we will be opening them in more ways than one.

Steve Brooks is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Special Education: It's What We Do!

by Dr. Wayne Nesbit

When children are vulnerable, where potential is in jeopardy, special educators roll up their sleeves.

Some children master skills and integrate information from the classroom environment irrespective of the level of content complexity. These are incidental learners who are resilient and capable of "autoeducation", (or self teaching) in the words of Maria Montessori, the gifted Italian educational pioneer. *Most* children can achieve when good teaching prevails and methodology is adaptive and flexible.

Other children, about 18-20 percent of the school population, struggle to achieve. For them, school is not easy and in some instances not possible without consistent focused assistance. These learners require a differentiated curriculum or differentiated educational strategies – *or both* – if they are to succeed. Such children are described as "exceptional", "challenged" or as having "special needs". It falls upon special educators to do much of the "heavy lifting" in these children's education. These specialists share skills that reflect their training as well as their insights and personal intuition. Unfortunately, in the past, special education was sometimes neither *education* nor *special*. The paradigm shift over the last 35 years has been nothing short of astounding.

Providing Special Education – A Rocky Road

Newfoundland and Labrador's population distribution reflecting a coastal settlement pattern has been problematic with regard to the provision of special education services. In scattered low population areas, financing teaching units for "low-incidence" disabilities has been particularly problematic – i.e., a child with sight restrictions in an off-shore outport or a child with spina bifida in Labrador.

In retrospect, the challenge has been tremendous, compounded by a lack of qualified special educators (Memorial University's Special Education program did not exist until 1973). Transportation – linked to geography – posed issues as well. Recruitment of itinerant teachers as well as issues related to centralization generated concern. With no disrespect to the many dedicated educators who worked with commitment in rural placements, one-room schools and multigrade classrooms, teachers (understandably) tended to overlook children with special needs while focusing upon more capable learners. Additionally, social apathy and the perceived stigma associated with exceptionality served to deny special learners a voice during earlier years. Parents acquiesced – often unaware of the potential of education to help create functional independence.

The first strivings in special education were segregated special classes called "opportunity classes" which appeared sporadically around the Province as a legitimate attempt "to do something" for children with learning challenges. The term *opportunity* had a "good ring" to it but the opportunity provided by such classes did not extend very far beyond the name. These first efforts were characterized by the following untoward attributes:

- no teacher training in exceptionality
- programs perceived as an *alternative* to education
- no screening methods for inclusion in special education
- described in retrospect as a "dumping ground" for *all* exceptional children – various disabling conditions with chronological ages 5-16 and mental ages of an indeterminate range
- Over-emphasis on crafts and "hand work"
- No special curriculum or materials (the regular curriculum was "watered-down").

From the humble beginnings of the opportunity class era, there has evolved a sophisticated and highly individualized system of special education which now characterizes efforts in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Why be a Special Educator?

The real question is philosophic. There is a segment of society that would posit (if not verbalize) the view that special education is both a waste of time and taxpayers' money. Years ago on an airplane en route

to a special education conference, a passenger sitting beside me noticed that I was reading a book on exceptionality. He asked me why I would bother to interest myself in such a "useless cause". He went on to state that funding would be much better invested in gifted kids – "the ones who will solve priority problems such as the global population explosion, world food shortages, pending pandemics and the threat of a nuclear exchange". As harsh as his views were, they prompted me to rethink my personal philosophy concerning special education. Each teacher must know not only the content or "the what" of their teaching, but also "the why" of their teaching.

Over the years many special educators have helped to forge my personal philosophy. I believe that special educators hold many views in common which validate their involvement.

Entitlement is a central element in the philosophy of special education held by many. It is a matter of Human Rights, a commitment to each member of society. This aligns with the 1982 *Canada Act* which guarantees civil rights and freedoms to all Canadians. It states under Equality Rights, Section 15 (1), that: "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability". An astute writer once noted that the true measure of any society is the manner in which it treats its less capable members.

Special educators see special education as a vehicle to promote dignity, self-worth and increasing independence. They see themselves as change agents helping to "level the playing field". They do not measure human worth in terms of IQ or academic ability but view *all* children as deserving respect, care, support and achievement.

As well, special educators believe that a child's potential, irrespective of the associated disabilities, must be cultivated and exploited to the child's advantage. This belief emanates from the knowledge that exceptional children *can learn*. Advances in methodology and technology over recent years have convincingly demonstrated that exceptional children are capable of improvement through education.

In earlier days these children were viewed as not capable of being educated. A protective, custodial, care model seemed appropriate. But the major impact of methodologies such as task analysis, behavior modification, and the vast menu of technological advances, flies in the face of earlier thinking. With this knowledge concerning capacity comes the obligation to teach.

Special educators step forward to help, viewing special needs education as a challenging career choice where they can be a catalyst for rewarding change while engaging in very meaningful relationships. I once asked a special education teacher who was nearing retirement: "What is the single most important requirement for success as a special educator?" She smiled and replied: "The wisdom of Solomon, the strength of David and the patience of Job."

With roots in the *normalization* principle conceived in Scandinavia, there is a new face to education in our Province – one which focuses upon collaboration and teamwork. Gone are the days when the special education teacher with her defined number of students would function as a closed ecology, set off from the rest of the school in their own classroom. That era has past. All who are involved in special education today have a more complex and expanded role which stands in contrast to the isolated and restricted role of thirty years ago. The emerging role is characterized by collaborative teamwork. This paradigm shift reflects both an attitude change, and at a broader level, commitment to a much more inclusive philosophy vis-à-vis education. *(cont'd)*

The more collaborative and flexible role of today's special educators in Newfoundland and Labrador parallels the flexibility inherent in our *Pathways* model. Special educators try to assure a goodness-of-fit between a student's ability and appropriate pathway selections. Brenda Smith, a distinguished Newfoundland special educator, views the *Pathways* model (to which she was a key contributor) as "reflecting the spirit of inclusivity" (personal communication, August 18, 2009). Children with special needs are increasingly being accommodated in regular mainstream classes. In fact, it is only in instances where there are very "compelling reasons" (such as the safety of the child or his peers, or risk of the child's dignity being compromised) that programming varies from an inclusionary model. For the classroom teacher new challenges regularly appear. It is with the help of special educators that the model comes alive.

Rejecting collaboration is not an option. Special educators play a pivotal role as they work in a spirit of inclusivity. They are advocates for making learning accessible to exceptional students. Equity/fairness is interpreted as providing each child what they individually need to learn – it does not mean that learners must necessarily receive the same accommodations and/or modifications.

In her opening address at the 2009 Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children in Seattle, CEC President Dr. Kathleen Puckett provided strong inspirational leadership. She drew from *The silent revolution: Dynamic leadership in the student council* (1968), a booklet written for high-school student leaders by Kent Keith, a then 19-year-old student at Harvard University. She quoted Keith's *Paradoxical Commandments* as set out in his publication:

People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered.
Love them anyway.
If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Do good anyway.
If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.
Succeed anyway.
The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway.
Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.
Be honest and frank anyway.
The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds.
Think big anyway.
People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.
Fight for a few underdogs anyway.
What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.
Build anyway.
People really need help but may attack you if you do help them.
Help people anyway.
Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in teeth.
Give the world the best you have anyway.
(cited by K. Puckett at the CEC Annual Convention, April 2009 with permission of Dr. Keith)

As special educators our role is **pivotal**. According to Puckett, "A deep concern for our children and young adults makes it possible to understand these paradoxes with compassion. If you're in it for them, you may not always succeed, but you can be happy in the knowledge that you are doing things which are as meaningful as possible. You're working at full potential, so there can be no regrets. You're doing the most you can, as best you can."

In conclusion, Puckett noted that "In a society where sports figures, rock stars and hedge fund managers impress us more than the people teaching our children to read, the CEC [and special educators] continue to value social justice and the dignity and worth of all individuals. We have daily opportunities to do good anyway."

A book by R.B. Edgerton, *The Cloak of Competence* (1967), had a profound impact upon my thinking during my early years as an educator. It is Edgerton's contention that no one is perfectly adequate in all avenues of endeavour and so each person manages his/her affairs so as to hide imperfections from others and to display their competencies – each one fashions "a cloak of competence." As educators, and as people generally, we do this as a normal coping procedure; for the most part, we are reasonably successful. When we as educators make a negative evaluation of a student's best effort, we are not only telling them that they do not measure up to expectations, we are destroying their chance to fashion a cloak of competence. All teachers, and in particular special educators, must be accomplished tailors.

Dr. Wayne Nesbit is a Professor in the Faculty of Education, Memorial University.

Careers Coming for Lunch

by KATHLEEN HICKMAN

"Careers Coming for Lunch... You're Gonna Learn a Bunch!" is the off key, enthusiastic chant sung over the P.A. just before the lunch bell at O'Donel High School in Mount Pearl. This chant is my inviting reminder for students to attend one of the two lunchtime "Careers Coming for Lunch" sessions. Hot free pizza lunch awaits students in the Resource Centre and Patriot Student Centre where community speakers prepare to discuss their education, work experiences and the realities of their careers. Careers Coming for Lunch goes ahead every Wednesday for ten weeks from February to April.

Want a different Career Development idea for your school that offers the following strengths?

- Offers both administration and staff a chance to informally interact with various students.
- Requires minimal work once a strong team and plan are established.
- Supports the work of our busy guidance counselors.
- Demonstrates to students and families that you are concerned about your students' futures.
- Emphasizes the critical need for post-secondary study.
- Provides authentic insights into the varied presenters' work lives.
- Reinforces the bridges between high school and the work world.
- Provides hungry students a free hot lunch.
- Respects and values everyone's work.
- Requires minimal school funds, i.e. assuming a project sponsor is secured.
- Provides career information to students whose family lives may not provide positive direction.
- Builds school community, as different students meet who share a common career interest.
- Invites students to only attend sessions in which they have an interest.
- Brings the external community into your school in a positive manner that promotes education.

Project Beginnings

Several years ago before Career Education was a core course for all students, I became increasingly aware of the need for students to have a wider exposure to career areas and to interact with persons working in diverse, non-traditional fields. At the same time, I noted the large numbers of students who remained in the school building during the miserable winter months for their lunch period. So, I decided to establish a series of lunchtime information sessions to offer students an opportunity to attend (with their friends) an informal and interactive chat with people who were happily employed in their chosen career area. This meant no fancy PowerPoint presentations with statistics and formal speeches but rather down-to-earth honest conversations with real life people about their daily work and always with a staff member in attendance.

Realizing that I really needed help to successfully launch "Careers Coming for Lunch", I asked for the help of staff volunteers. In true O'Donel style, Principal Mike Sutton and our staff actively supported the project and a strong team has regularly come forward to make this project a yearly success. Over the five years of the project there has been a steady flow of staff members who have assisted, such as Suzanne Goodland, Frank Hollohan, Joanne Power, Jackie Rockett, Cindy Rose and David Lynch. These committed people have played integral roles in organizing the program, volunteering to secure competent, engaging speakers and supervising the lunch time sessions.

Present Offerings

Over the past five years, the program has expanded from 10 sessions (1 per week) to 20 sessions (2 per week) for the 10 weeks of the project. In the 2008-09 school year, a total of 20 sessions were provided as shown below and approximately 400 students attended these career sessions.

Project Calendar

1. Late Fall – Determining Career Areas to Include and Securing Funding

Cindy Rose, our guidance counsellor, visits and surveys all Level III students to determine the career areas that most interest these students. Cindy arranges the collation of the survey results and creates a

ranking of students' preferred career areas for inclusion in "Careers Coming for Lunch". The fall is the right time to begin efforts to secure project sponsors; an investment of $1000 would cover all project costs. The search for project sponsor(s) would be an appropriate project for a student leadership team, student council or the Enterprise classes.

2. *Early January –Scheduling of Selected Speakers*
Cindy Rose and I review the ranking of preferred career areas and together we determine the final 20 career sessions that will comprise the year's offerings of "Careers Coming for Lunch". A sincere effort is made to include non-traditional career areas and to vary the session offerings from year-to-year. The 20 sessions are composed of 10 trades/technology sessions and 10 professional sessions. Each Wednesday a trades/technology session (e.g. heavy equipment operator or commercial cook) and a professional session (e.g. engineer or nurse) are offered. Over the three years of high school, it is quite possible for any student to attend 30 different, free career sessions.

Here is our 2009 schedule:

Date	Resource Centre	Patriot Student Centre
Feb. 11	Social Work	Heavy Equipment Operator
Feb. 18	MUN Engineer	Hairstylist
Feb. 25	Nursing	Electrician
Mar. 4	MUN Business	Textiles/Craft & Apparel Design
Mar. 11	Science at MUN	Welding
Mar. 25	Pharmacy	Pipe Fitting
Apr. 1	Teacher Ed. at MUN	Automotive Mechanic
Apr. 8	Engineer Tech (CNA)	Industrial Instrument Mechanic
Apr. 22	RCMP	Design Robotics & Carpentry
Apr. 29	Medicine/Psychiatry	Cooking/Culinary Arts

• 12:45 - 1:00: Speakers will chat about their education, backgrounds and experiences in a relaxed and informal setting.
• 1:00 - 1:15: Question-and-answer period.

To ensure that 20 engaging speakers are secured, a team of 3-4 staff meet to review the needed career speakers and who then self-select areas to secure speakers. It is a priority that we know the speakers as being a positive representative of their career/work area.

3. *During January Exams – Informing/Registering Students and Preparing Promotional Materials*
In consultation with our art teacher, Nicole Pitcher, and guidance counsellor, Cindy Rose, we identify and invite two students to create an eye-catching, mock up design for the 20 career sessions. This design must include a promotional display and sign up form for each session and be posted on the school's first floor; photos from previous years' displays are provided to help the students understand what is needed. Once the mock up design is provided and accepted, the students have two weeks to prepare and post the display. Particular consideration is given to inviting students with artistic talent who may need 10 hours of community service to receive credit for their Career Education course.

Another way that specific students engage in the functioning of "Careers Coming for Lunch" is as coordinators of the project; two students will attend one session each week to assist with food distribution, to provide any needed support to the speaker and to properly arrange the room after each session. This can be another way for students (particularly those with various challenges such as transportation) to earn 10 community hours during the lunch hour and on the school premises.

4. *Early February – Promoting the Project*
Promoting "Careers Coming for Lunch" is given full attention for the first week of February when students are asked to sign up on the display wall to attend the various careers sessions. We limit 30 students to each session to ensure an inviting interchange between speaker and students.

Careers Coming for Lunch promotional display at O'Donel High.

Promotional strategies include:
• post bright poster pages throughout the building (especially bathrooms!) and staff room
• encourage all teachers, and particularly those in Career Education, to support "Careers Coming for Lunch" attendance

•emphasize the sponsor's name/logo on the display wall
• actively promote the program via repeated school announcements during the sign up week (invite a student to make some of these announcements)
• ask administration to chat up the program with students at recess and lunchtime by bringing students' attention to the display wall and engaging them in chats about their future plans
• collaborate with Career Education teachers to arrange an assignment requiring attendance at a couple of speaker presentations
• insert voice message on information phone line
• insert a promotional note on the February reports
• include in the morning radio school announcements
• email project information to all parents/guardians
• post project information and schedule of sessions to school web page
• include a brief write up in the February School Newsletter, in our case *The Patriot News*

MOST IMPORTANTLY…the FOOD
Visit or call three nearby pizza places (if possible) and speak to the respective owners. Tell the owners that your school will be buying two to six jumbo pepperoni/cheese pizzas every Wednesday (just before your school lunch hour) for the next 10 weeks. Ask for a quote per pizza. You will be surprised at the varying costs! You will usually get a discount when they learn you will be ordering a total of over 20 pizzas and advise them that you could include them as a school sponsor if they would give you a great discount. We chose to restrict the pizza choice to keep the costs down and to avoid any food choice wars.

5. February, March, April – Promoting and Operating the Project
During the Monday and Tuesday before the "Careers Coming for Lunch" make energetic, varied school announcements about the project; emphasize that all students from Level I-IV are welcome.

In an effort to have sufficient pizza and to avoid wastage, always consult the sign up wall to determine the number of pizzas to order for each session. Every time you order ask for lots of napkins as well.

6. April/May - Acknowledging the Speakers' Support
Many of the speakers take time from their very busy schedules to visit because they care about their work and education. Consequently, personalized and gold star-embossed appreciation certificates are sent to all speakers as a sign of our sincere appreciation.

In Closing
"Careers Coming for Lunch" is offered at O'Donel High School which is a large school in the most heavily populated area of our province where there is easy access to speakers. Rural schools with sparse populations and limited available speakers may face challenges in implementing this project into their schools. However, with extensive planning, a strong school team and increased use of technology there should be a way to implement a modified version into your school. When this project was first conceived, there were doubters who suggested that students would never attend on their lunch hours; however, the doubters only spurred our team to work harder to find ways to ensure "Careers Coming for Lunch" would bring meaningful and relevant career information to our students – and it has. One student leaving a session was overheard saying "Wow, had no idea about the kind of work that engineers really can do' and a speaker, hair stylist Cory Stuckless, was heard to say "Great to return to high school, I really enjoyed speaking with your students – they were really interested".

If you would like further details just give me a call at 364-5305 or kathleenhickman@esdnl.ca. It would be my pleasure to help you in anyway. Additionally, I would be only too happy to speak to your staff about the details of "Careers Coming for Lunch".

Kathy Hickman is Assistant Principal at O'Donel High School in Mount Pearl.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR NEW TEACHERS

NEW TEACHER KITS

If you HAVE NOT yet received your NLTA New Teacher Kit, please contact:

Susan Cardoulis
Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Tel: 726-3223, ext 246 or
1-800-563-3599 (toll free)
scardoulis@nlta.nl.ca

EDGE CONFERENCE 2009

October 14-16, 2009

Sheraton Hotel, St. John's. The Edge 2009 international conference on teaching and teacher education will provide opportunities for researchers, teachers, administrators, and policy makers to span traditional boundaries and generate new knowledge in the areas of teaching and teacher education. Issues and ideas relating to the content, skills and knowledge of teacher education programs, internships and practica, certification and accreditation, mentorship, aboriginal teacher education and continuing education of teachers, college instructors and university professors will be discussed in this innovative, inspiring and provocative forum. Please visit www.mun.ca/edge2009 for more information.

NLCPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & AGM 2009

October 21-23, 2009

Capital Hotel, Kenmount Road, St. John's. Theme: *Enhancing Practice through Professional Collaboration & Consultation.* Agenda and registration information will be available in the near future. Inquiries may be directly to Trent Langdon, NLCPA President at trentlangdon@esdnl.ca.

NATIONAL CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

November 2-3, 2009

Deerhurst Resort, Huntsville, Ontario. Educator Pre-Conference: Dr. David Suzuki and Dr. Phil Vincent. Youth Pre-Conference: Micah Jacobson. Keynote Speakers: Tom Jackson, Dr. Monte Selby, Micah Jacobson. For further information please visit www.ncec.ca.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION SIC CONFERENCE

November 12-13, 2009

Albatross Hotel, Gander. Presenter call: If you have a presentation or topic you are interested in presenting at this conference please send abstract and particulars to: Joe LaFitte, joelafitte@hotmail.com; or Corey D'Entremont, coreydentremont@esdnl.ca.

MCGILL UNIV. CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DISTINGUISHED EDUCATORS SEMINAR SERIES

Fall 2009

For information visit: www.mcgill.ca/edudise/centres/cel/seminar/

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE 2010

March 17-19, 2010

Glynmill Inn, Corner Brook. Theme: *Leading from Good to Great.* Join us in Corner Brook for a cool learning experience. Book your room by calling 634-5181. More information to follow.

Dates to Remember

October 2009

Oct 15	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications
Oct 15-16	Pre-Retirement Seminar, Gander
Oct 16-17	School Rep Seminar, St. John's
Oct 23-24	School Rep Seminar, Corner Brook
Oct 29-30	Pre-Retirement Seminar, Grand Falls-Windsor
Oct 30-31	School Rep Seminar, G.F.-Windsor

November 2009

Nov 5-6	Pre-Retirement Seminar, Corner Brook
Nov 7	**Deadline:** Project Overseas Applications
Nov 12-13	Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
Nov 15	**Department Deadline:** Teacher Exchange applications to Australia, Britain and USA.
Nov 19	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications
Nov 26	NLTA Executive Meeting
Nov 27-28	Joint Council Meeting

December 2009

Dec 3-4	Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
Dec 10-11	Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
Dec 15	**Department Deadline:** Teacher Exchange applications to Ontario
Dec 17	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications

Project Overseas

Teachers Teaching Teachers

Would you like to assist teachers in a developing country? Are you interested in learning more about global education issues? Can you see yourself volunteering in Africa, Asia, or the Caribbean?

CTF needs English and French-speaking Canadian teachers at the primary, elementary and secondary levels who are interested in volunteering to offer in-services in a wide range of subjects in countries overseas.

Application criteria include:

- be a member of a provincial/territorial teacher organization that supports PO;
- hold a valid teacher's certificate;
- have completed at least five years teaching in Canada by July 2010;
- be a Canadian citizen;
- be in excellent health and able to work in developing country conditions (a doctor's letter is required);
- show evidence of flexibility, mature judgment, and a strong willingness to put the team and project needs above personal needs;
- hold a Canadian passport valid until at least December 2011, at the time of application (proof that a passport application has been made will be accepted).

PO is a volunteer experience. Travel and living expenses are covered by contributions from CTF Members, the Canadian International Development Agency and CTF. No salaries or honoraria are paid to participants in PO.

TO APPLY:

Further information and application forms are available from:
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road,
St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599
Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582

Deadline date for applications:
November 7, 2009